1st National Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

National Academy for the Performing Arts (NAPA)
Port of Spain, Trinidad

“Promoting a Culture of Quality through Continuous Improvement of the Higher Education Sector”

Events

Opening Ceremony

• Thursday November 17, 2011 at 8:30 am

Concurrent Sessions

• November 17-18, 2011

Closing Ceremony and Presentation of QuITE Awards

• Friday November 18, 2011 at 4:00 p.m.
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- Conference Session rooms are located on the ground floor of the National Academy for the Performing Arts (NAPA), Port of Spain, Trinidad – Theatre 1 and Theatre 2
- The Secretariat is located on the ground floor of the NAPA hotel
- Dress code for the Awards Ceremony and Cocktail Reception: Business Attire
- Linx machine available for payment of registration fees
- Certificates of Participation will be distributed after the Conference
The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) was established by Chapter 39:06 as the principal body in Trinidad and Tobago responsible for the quality assurance of higher education institution programmes and awards. The primary services offered by ACTT are conferment of institutional title, registration of higher education institutions, accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes, recognition of foreign qualifications and awards, programme approval and quality enhancement support for institutions. The work of ACTT mirrors the commitment by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to improve quality in the tertiary education sector. It ensures that stakeholders obtain value for their investment and by extension also facilitates increased economic, social and cultural development as quality assured Institutions produce world class graduates who are committed to the task of national and regional development.

Mission

To assure the quality and integrity of higher education primarily through recognition, registration and accreditation as well as public education and related activities, while ensuring the efficiency and transparency of our operations and demonstrating commitment to national development and global competitiveness.

Vision

ACTT will be the principal authority in Trinidad and Tobago for quality assurance and continuous improvement in higher education and a leader in innovation and best practice.
Message from the Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education

Senator the Honourable Fazal Karim

It is with great pleasure that I welcome all participants to the 1st National Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education hosted by The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT). ACTT is charged with the task of regulating quality assurance in the local tertiary education sector and this initiative is yet another demonstration of its consistent delivery in regard to this very important mandate.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago fully endorses the theme ‘Promoting a Culture of Quality through Continuous Improvement of the Higher Education Sector’ as it mirrors our approach to higher education in Trinidad and Tobago. Committed to the harmonisation, rationalisation and modernisation of our higher education system, we are working assiduously to enhance the quality of our local tertiary level institutions to ensure that our student population can stand shoulder to shoulder with their peers in the international job market.

ACTT continues to work in concert with the Government to offer our citizens access to a diverse range of quality assured programmes. Within the past year alone ACTT has awarded accreditation to three public tertiary level institutions – The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), The University of the West Indies and the College of Science, Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTAATT). The agency has also hosted yet another successful Quality Assurance Month and published the *Compendium of Registered, Accredited and Recognised Institutions, Awarding Bodies and Programmes 2011-2012*, which is now available online for the benefit of our nation’s students.

This National Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education once again illustrates ACTT’s unwavering commitment to the enhancement of post secondary education in Trinidad and Tobago. It is my hope that all attendees will engage in enlightening dialogue on the way forward for this vital sector as we strive to build an internationally competitive nation.

I wish to express my gratitude to ACTT, on behalf of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, for coordinating this very important conference. I am confident that the proceedings over the next two days will yield fruitful discourse that will serve to positively and permanently alter the landscape of higher education in Trinidad and Tobago.
Welcome Message from the Chairman of the Board of Directors, ACTT
Michael R. Dowlath, Ph.D.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) I welcome all presenters and participants to ACTT’s 1st National Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education. ACTT has taken the initiative to provide a forum for practitioners in the higher education sector to share ideas on this subject and get a better understanding of quality assurance in higher education.

As you peruse our agenda you will see that ACTT has put together a conference filled not only with experts in the field of higher education but also with intriguing subject matter. It is our hope that the discussions held during the two days will indeed guide us towards arriving at concrete recommendations which will benefit not only the sector but all of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago envisions a higher education sector that is efficient, effective and gives value for money. The work of ACTT perpetuates the commitment of the Government to improve quality in the higher education sector. Citizens have a right to access quality higher education that is fit for purpose and can transform individuals into better human beings. Our organisational activities are focussed on making a difference in the lives of citizens who depend on us to safeguard their interests.

It is with this goal in mind that I ask all participants to deploy the knowledge and skills gained at this conference to your institutions as it will aid in strengthening your Quality Management Systems and allow for critical thinking, creativity and innovation.

Best wishes for a successful conference.
Message from the Executive Director, ACTT

Michael Bradshaw

It is with pleasure that I welcome all participants, especially our overseas visitors, to our 1st National Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education. Over the next two days we will all engage in conversations influenced by our conference theme, ‘Promoting a Culture of Quality through Continuous Improvement of the Higher Education Sector’. ACTT’s involvement and investment in activities such as this initiative, that brings “the minds” together to explore this thesis, can only result in the production of stimuli to engender the construct of a knowledge-based economy. Your challenge will be to take the ideas generated at this conference to continue the conversation within your institutions. There is no doubt that these experiences can redound to great benefits to your graduates who will in turn use the experiences assembled to transfer into the workplace.

Generally, the advantage of a quality culture through recognition of a need to promote continual improvement as a normal part of the institution’s operations, fosters a mindset where activities undertaken by the institution become ingrained in the fabric of the institution’s business and allocations for implementation are provided for in annual budgets. The existence of such a ‘culture’ will facilitate improved delivery of quality education, which will increase demand for the local educational product on the world market. Such a phenomenon can certainly position Trinidad & Tobago as a “higher education tourism destination”.

The success of this conference depends on you. Your active involvement and contributions to the conversations started will be of vital importance in determining effective and practical measures to promote this quality culture within Trinidad and Tobago and the region. Permit me to invite you to participate and to make contributions.

In closing, on behalf of the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago, I wish all participants an enjoyable and productive conference.
ACTT’s 1st National Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education 2011
Steering Committee

Michael Bradshaw
Executive Director

Ronald Brunton
Director, Qualification and Recognition

Emily Pascal
Director, Finance and Administration

Curtis Floyd
Director (Ag), Accreditation and Quality Enhancement

Simone Primus
Manager (Ag), Registration

Karel Stephen
Corporate Communications Specialist

Sarah Coomansingh
Accountant, Finance and Administration

Sharon Delochan
Assessment Officer, Qualification and Recognition

Marissia Alexander-Wilkinson
Quality Enhancement Officer, Accreditation and Quality Enhancement

Rajiv Jebodh
Legal Research Officer, Legal Department
# Schedule of Events

## THURSDAY NOVEMBER 17, 2011

### Day 1

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
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<tr>
<td>7:30 am</td>
<td><strong>REGISTRATION</strong></td>
<td>NAPA Hotel Lobby</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 am</td>
<td><strong>OPENING CEREMONY</strong></td>
<td>Theatre 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:20 am</td>
<td>“Seamless Education: Facilitating Lifelong Personal and Career Success for the Learner”</td>
<td>Theatre 2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr Gwendoline Williams, Associate Faculty</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:10 am</td>
<td><strong>COFFEE BREAK</strong></td>
<td>NAPA Hotel Lobby</td>
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<td>10:30 am</td>
<td><strong>CONCURRENT SESSION 1</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>REMOVING BARRIERS IN EDUCATION – GOING SEAMLESS?</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Designing a National Qualification and Credit Framework for Trinidad and Tobago”</td>
<td>Theatre 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dr Ronald Brunton, Director, Qualifications and Recognition</td>
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<td>The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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<td>“Assuring Quality in Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Trinidad and Tobago”</td>
<td>Theatre 2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elphege Joseph, Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>National Training Agency, Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:05 am</td>
<td><strong>CONCURRENT SESSION 2</strong></td>
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<td><strong>INNOVATION IN QUALITY ASSURANCE – SHARING BEST PRACTICE</strong></td>
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<td>“Quality Assurance in a Language Learning Centre: Challenges and Opportunities”</td>
<td>Theatre 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dr Beverly-Anne Carter, Director</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Centre for Language Learning, The University of the West Indies</td>
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<td>“Improving Quality in the Tertiary Education- The University of Trinidad and Tobago Experience”</td>
<td>Theatre 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jeremy Williams, Quality Assurance Officer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cherise Thompson, Quality Assurance Officer</td>
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<td>The University of Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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**THURSDAY NOVEMBER 17, 2011**

#### Day 1 (Cont’d)

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<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
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</table>
| 11:40 am – 12:10 noon | **CONCURRENT SESSION 3**  
**GOOD GOVERNANCE, GOOD SYSTEMS, GOOD PRACTICE**  
“Student Feedback on Teaching and Learning at the University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus”  
Dr Sandra Gift, Senior Programme Officer  
Candice Hickson, Research Assistant  
Quality Assurance Unit, The University of the West Indies, St Augustine  
“A Search for Standards in the Field of Teacher Education in Trinidad and Tobago”  
Dr Samuel Lochan, Lecturer  
Beular Mitchell, Assistant Lecturer  
School of Education, The University of the West Indies | Theatre 1  
Theatre 2 |
| 12:15 noon – 1:15 pm | **LUNCH BREAK** | Restaurant |
| 1:20 pm – 2:05 pm | **PLENARY 2**  
DEVELOPING A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR MAINTAINING A ROBUST QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (QMS)  
“Quality in Higher Education Institutions: The Whole or the Part?”  
Dr Jerome De Lisle, Senior Lecturer, School of Education  
The University of the West Indies | Theatre 1 |
| 2:10 pm – 2:40 pm | **CONCURRENT SESSION 4**  
DEVELOPING A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR MAINTAINING A ROBUST QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (QMS)  
“Promoting a Culture of Quality through Continuous Improvement of the Higher Education Sector”  
Jaidath Maharaj, Manager Quality Assurance  
Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business  
“Impact of Higher Education Quality Management Systems on Economic Competitiveness: A Case Study of Trinidad and Tobago”  
Nyron Seaton, Policy Research Specialist  
The Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education | Theatre 1  
Theatre 2 |
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**Day 1 (Cont’d)**

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<th>TIME</th>
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<tr>
<td>2:45 pm – 3:15 pm</td>
<td><strong>CONCURRENT SESSION 5</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>REMOVING BARRIERS IN EDUCATION- GOING SEAMLESS?</strong></td>
<td>Theatre 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“The Role of Articulation Agreements in Creating Seamless Education in the Higher Education Sector”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Raquel Sukhu, Accreditation Officer</td>
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<td>Peter Thomas, Accreditation Officer</td>
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<td>3:20 pm – 3:50 pm</td>
<td><strong>CONCURRENT SESSION 6</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>DESIGNING INDIGENOUS PROGRAMMES TO MEET MARKET NEEDS</strong></td>
<td>Theatre 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Denise-Margaret Thompson, Professor</td>
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<td>Dennis Nurse, Senior Instructor</td>
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<td>The University of Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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<td>3:20 pm – 3:50 pm</td>
<td><strong>CONCURRENT SESSION 6</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>DESIGNING INDIGENOUS PROGRAMMES TO MEET MARKET NEEDS</strong></td>
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<td>3:20 pm – 3:50 pm</td>
<td><strong>CONCURRENT SESSION 6</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>DESIGNING INDIGENOUS PROGRAMMES TO MEET MARKET NEEDS</strong></td>
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## Schedule of Events

### Day 2

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<th>TIME</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 am</td>
<td>REGISTRATION</td>
<td>NAPA Lobby</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PLENARY 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>DESIGNING INDIGENOUS PROGRAMMES TO MEET MARKET NEEDS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 am – 9:45 am</td>
<td>“Planning Indigenous Programmes: Challenges and Opportunities”</td>
<td>Theatre 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Patricia Worrell, Lecturer, School of Education</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The University of the West Indies</td>
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<td>9:50 am – 10:05 am</td>
<td>COFFEE BREAK</td>
<td>NAPA Hotel Lobby</td>
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<td>10:10 am – 10:05 am</td>
<td>CONCURRENT SESSION 7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DESIGNING INDIGENOUS PROGRAMMES TO MEET MARKET NEEDS</strong></td>
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<td>“Evolution and Implementation of Industrially-Oriented Capstone Design Projects at the University of Trinidad and Tobago”</td>
<td>Theatre 1</td>
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<td>Dr Marion Watson, Assistant Professor, The University of Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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<td>“Remembering “Who I am” In Teacher Education</td>
<td>Theatre 2</td>
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<td>Pearl Rivers, Research Associate, The University of Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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<td>10:45 am – 11:15 am</td>
<td>CONCURRENT SESSION 8</td>
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<td><strong>GOOD GOVERNANCE, GOOD SYSTEMS, GOOD PRACTICE</strong></td>
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<td>“Making the Case for ‘Competency Based Teacher Standards’ and the Attainment of Learning Outcomes – as a Quality Measure for Good Practice, Systems and Governance”</td>
<td>Theatre 1</td>
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<td>Mervyn Extavour, Director/ Lecturer/ Treasurer/ President, Cipriani College Labour and Co-operative Science</td>
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<td><strong>ICT &amp; TECHNOLOGY MEDIATED LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION</strong></td>
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<td>“The Role of ICT in Transforming Vocational Legal Education in Economically Challenging Times – Can it be Done and How?”</td>
<td>Theatre 2</td>
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<td>Michael Theodore, Course Director, Hugh Wooding Law School</td>
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| 11:20 am – 11:50 am | **CONCURRENT SESSION 9**  
**DESIGNING INDIGEOUS PROGRAMMES TO MEET MARKET NEEDS**  
“Reversing the Trend: Local TLIs as Providers of Cross-Border Education?”  
Curtis Floyd, Director (Ag), Accreditation and Quality Enhancement  
The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago  
“State Funding of Higher Education and Labour Market Demands: Bridging the Gap”  
Dionne Smith, Quality Assurance Officer, Registration  
The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago | Theatre 1, Theatre 2 |
| 11:55 am – 12:55 noon | **LUNCH BREAK**  
Restaurant | |
| 1:00 pm – 1:30 pm | **CONCURRENT SESSION 10**  
**ICT & TECHNOLOGY MEDIATED LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION**  
“Student Perceptions of Using Facebook as a Learning Tool in an Undergraduate Teacher Education Programme”  
Professor Jeanette Morris, Programme Professor  
Jacqueline Morris, Instructor II  
The University of Trinidad and Tobago  
“Beyond Plumbing: Moving IT into the Core of the Academic Enterprise”  
Dr Ulrich Rauch, Professor  
The University of Trinidad and Tobago | Theatre 1, Theatre 2 |
| 1:35 pm – 2:05 pm | **CONCURRENT SESSION 11**  
**ICT & TECHNOLOGY MEDIATED LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION**  
“Perceptions on the Impact of Telecollaboration and Mediated Learning in Higher Education”  
Dr James K Bukari, Lecturer  
Maria Landa-Buil, Lecturer, Centre for Language Learning  
The University of the West Indies | Theatre 1 |
## Schedule of Events

### FRIDAY NOVEMBER 18, 2011

#### Day 2 (Cont’d)

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<td>1:35 pm – 2:05 pm</td>
<td><strong>CONCURRENT SESSION 11</strong></td>
<td>Theatre 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>GOOD GOVERNANCE, GOOD SYSTEMS, GOOD PRACTICE</strong></td>
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<td>“Formulating a Co-operative Framework between ACTT and Professional Bodies Established by Statute”</td>
<td>Theatre 2</td>
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<td>Rajiv Jebodh, Legal Research Officer, Legal Department</td>
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<td>The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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<td>2:10 pm – 2:40 pm</td>
<td><strong>SESSION 12</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ICT &amp; TECHNOLOGY MEDIATED LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION</strong></td>
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<td>“An Investigation into the Conduct and Management of Student Research in an Online Learning Environment: A Case study of an Online Master’s Research Programme in the University of the West Indies, Open Campus”</td>
<td>Theatre 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr Olabisi Kuboni, Head-Graduate Programmes</td>
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<td>Dr Rohan Jowallah, Programme Coordinator: Graduate Programmes</td>
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<td>Academic Programming and Delivery Division</td>
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<td>The University of the West Indies, Open Campus</td>
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<td>2:45 pm – 3:15 pm</td>
<td><strong>SESSION 13</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ICT &amp; TECHNOLOGY MEDIATED LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION</strong></td>
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<td>“Using ICT to Create Quality Learning Experiences: A Practical Guide for Tertiary Teachers of History”</td>
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<td>Dr Melisse Thomas-Bailey Ellis, Assistant Professor</td>
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<td>The University of Trinidad and Tobago and</td>
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<td>Paul Ellis, Systems Manager</td>
<td>National Library and Information System (NALIS)</td>
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<td>4:00 pm</td>
<td><strong>CLOSING CEREMONY AND PRESENTATION OF QuITE AWARDS</strong></td>
<td>Theatre 2</td>
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Biographies of Plenary Presenters

JEROME DE LISLE
Dr Jerome De Lisle is a Senior Lecturer in Educational Administration at the School of Education, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. Formerly Lecturer in Measurement and Evaluation, Centre for Medical Sciences Education in the Faculty of Medical Sciences, Dr. De Lisle’s current research is in the areas of evaluation, educational assessment, and gendered achievement. His extensive publication list in regional and international journals includes studies of achievement processes and systems in primary, secondary and higher education. Additionally, he has worked as an evaluator on behalf of the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago.

PATRICIA WORRELL
Patricia Worrell is a lecturer in Curriculum Studies at the School of Education, St. Augustine Campus of the University of the West Indies, and is also Deputy Dean, Planning and Programming of the Faculty of Humanities and Education, UWI. Her major research interests are in curriculum implementation and literacy education. Before joining the UWI team in 1996, she was an Assistant Registrar with responsibility for syllabus development with the Caribbean Examinations Council and prior to that she taught English Literature, General Paper and West Indian History at secondary schools in Trinidad.

DR GWENDOLINE WILLIAMS
Over the past thirty (30) years, Dr Williams has worked at all levels of the education system in the Caribbean, her last position being that of Head of the Department of Management Studies and Deputy Dean in the Faculty of Social Sciences, The University of the West Indies. Currently, she is an Associate Faculty at the Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business where she teaches in the Executive and International MBA and the Master’s in Human Resource Management Programmes. She also heads the Human Resource Management Subject Grouping that is geared to improvement in curriculum and instruction. She is listed as an Instructor at Walden Distance University, USA.

Dr Williams has been a management training and development consultant in the public, private and voluntary sectors and her major focus has been on capacity building in the areas of Management Development, Organisational Development/Management of Change, Human Resource Management, Gender and Development, and Youth Development. She has conducted consultancies in these areas throughout the Caribbean; the United Kingdom; Eastern and Southern Africa (South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland and Uganda); West Africa (the Gambia and Nigeria), India, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in the Middle East, Malta and the Maldives.

Apart from delivering training programmes, she has been a member of several project consulting teams for regional and international organisations, including the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM), UNDP,
UNESCO, CARICAD, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the World Bank, and the British Council (DFID).

For the period 2006-2009, Dr Williams was appointed as the sole Caribbean representative to the United Nations 24-member Council of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA), a sub-committee of the UN's Economic and Social Council. Her key involvement in the work of the Committee was as a member of the Review Team for the UN Public Service Awards Programme based on submissions of innovative public administration projects from UN member countries worldwide. In April 2009, her membership in CEPA was extended for a second term, 2010 – 2013 and she now heads the Review Team for the UN Public Service Awards Programme.
Dr Ronald Brunton, Director Qualifications and Recognition  
The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago  

Designing a National Qualifications and Credit Framework for Trinidad and Tobago

The growing demands of globalisation, international recognition of qualifications and the movement of skilled persons make it imperative that local qualifications are aligned with regional and extra-regional standards. The paper provides an overview of the roles and relationship between national entities and key stakeholders involved in developing a National Qualifications and Credit Framework for Trinidad and Tobago. The paper examines the need for a systematic approach that would include participation from key stakeholders; harmonisation with international qualifications frameworks; systematic research on existing qualifications at local institutions; and other key processes required for realising a National Qualifications and Credit Framework. The paper draws upon current literature and international best practice on qualifications frameworks, including the experience of the Bologna Process. The paper recommends that maximum input is solicited from key stakeholders that have not yet been involved in the discourse. While the paper recommends the design of a National Qualifications and Credit Framework for Trinidad and Tobago, this should be done within the context of regional standards and the need for a Regional Qualifications Framework.

Elphege Joseph, Chief Executive Officer  
National Training Agency  

Assuring Quality in Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Trinidad and Tobago

The Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB) (1999) defines PLAR as a "process of identifying, assessing and recognising what a person knows and can do for the purpose of awarding merit and certification". The concept of PLAR is not new; it is an international practice that has evolved since the 1930s. PLAR has been linked with labour force development and has been utilised by the National Training Agency of Trinidad and Tobago (NTATT) since 2006 as the basis for the establishment of a skills assessment and certification programme to certify skilled persons towards Level 2 of the Regional and National Vocational Qualifications Framework in order to increase the supply of persons from which Technology Instructors may be sourced. More recently PLAR has been used to assess and certify informal and non-formal competencies of skilled but uncertified individuals via the Workforce Assessment Centres (WACs). There is no generally accepted definition of quality assurance in PLAR. However, the CLFDB has defined quality assurance in PLAR as “the establishment of and adherence to policies, processes, and assessment practices that ensure that the knowledge and skills of individual learners are recognised so that they can successfully engage in the subjects and levels of learning that contribute meaningfully to their educational and employment goals”.

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All stakeholders must be able to rely on the results of PLAR and according to one of the principles that comprise the minimum standards for PLAR in Canada; recognition awarded through PLAR should not be differentiated from that awarded in the traditional manner. A review of the literature has revealed that quality assurance in PLAR has been addressed by developing a Quality Assurance Delivery Framework based on five mechanisms, including legislation, government policy, collaboration, institution-based mechanisms and indirect stakeholder support. The NTATT subscribes to two dimensions of quality assurance for PLAR: policies and procedures and assessment methods and tools.

Beverly-Anne Carter, Director
Centre for Language Learning (CLL)
The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine

Quality Assurance in a Language Learning Centre: Challenges and Opportunities

The University of the West Indies (UWI) Centre for Language Learning (CLL) occupies a slightly different space in the tertiary education landscape in Trinidad and Tobago and indeed within the UWI network. It is in many ways similar to a traditional university academic department, but differs in a number of significant ways, for example, in its curricular offerings, its learners, and its staffing. Yet, what one teaches, to whom and by whom are critical to the definition of an academic unit. When those key indicators depart significantly from the norm, the case can be made that the reality of a language centre such as the CLL makes it unique vis-à-vis our conceptualisation of the proper functioning of an academic unit and by extension, unique in the challenges that it faces in the promotion of quality assurance.

Yet, the singularity of a language centre such as the CLL represents an opportunity for discovery, for innovation, for crafting the kind of academic unit that is likely to be more representative of the new norm in the coming decades, as academia adapts to the imperatives of the globalised higher education sector. This paper will look at how the CLL has met the challenges of its hybridity (part traditional academic department, part something else) and sought to live up to its vision as a (Caribbean) centre of excellence for languages, by applying a simple principle of continuous (quality) improvement as advocated by Pagano (2011) and Rodgers and Hornbeck (2006).
Increasing competition for public government funding of higher education, greater diversity of tertiary education providers and delivery modes, rapidly increasing tertiary enrolment rates, and growing demands by tertiary education stakeholders for more tangible returns on their investment in higher education has brought the role of higher education quality assurance into greater focus. Since its inception the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) has strived to institutionalise a culture of quality in all its operations. This paper will focus on how the maintenance and enhancement of a robust quality management system contributes directly and indirectly to ensure that existing and future processes embody a quality ethos and promote continuous improvement. A quality management system (QMS) not only aids in fostering customer focus, organisational efficiency and communication but also, according to Madu and Kuei (1995), describes a situation where all business functions/processes are involved in a process of continuous quality improvement.

UTT has embarked on an initiative to enhance its existing QMS through the following phases: (i) Phase 1 – Documentation of the Quality Management System in a Quality Manual; (ii) Phase 2 – Training and Sensitisation of Staff; (iii) Phase 3 – Documentation of Standardised Procedures; (iv) Phase 4 – Enhancement of Processes/Procedures; and (v) Phase 5 – Evaluation and Continuous Improvement of the Quality Management System. In this context this paper will also focus on the tools, techniques and strategies employed by the university in its ongoing journey through these phases which include process mapping, document control, quality audits and team-building and the milestones achieved and challenges encountered to date. Additionally the paper will discuss the future initiatives or activities to be undertaken to ensure a sustained organisational culture that is committed to rigorous quality assurance and continuous improvement.
The paper reviews and analyses student feedback data at the St Augustine Campus of the University of the West Indies over the period 2006 to 2011. Student feedback was captured via questionnaires completed prior to quality assurance reviews of the relevant disciplines. The data are analysed for an understanding of students’ perceptions of teaching and learning; what they considered to be strengths and weaknesses; what they disliked; areas of value of the programmes in which they were enrolled and their recommendations for improvement. The analysis is informed by a review of the international literature on institutional effectiveness and quality in higher education.

This paper sets out to explore the arrangements and practices for teacher preparation that exist in Trinidad and Tobago. This field has grown in recent years with new local and foreign institutions participating in teacher preparation. New face-to-face and online programmes have been offered to teachers within the last few years. However, there are no institutions of governance for teacher education in Trinidad and Tobago as exists in most other jurisdictions and professions. As well, there are no publicly accepted or formal standards for teacher preparation. This paper will examine the case for setting up institutions of governance. Recent efforts to formulate standards by CARICOM, OAS and the Ministry of Education (MoE) of Trinidad and Tobago will also be examined and assessed.
**Jaidath Maharaj,** Manager, Quality Assurance  
Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business

**Developing a Research Agenda for Maintaining a Robust Quality Management System (QMS)**

The paper explores the areas of research needed to build and maintain a robust Quality Management System (QMS). The paper considers the elements of quality in organisations and focuses on the features and the benefits of a robust QMS. It looks at the efforts of the Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business to build and maintain a robust QMS as a result of changes in structure, growth and direction of the school due to a changed economic climate. The paper also considers the challenges in developing the QMS as it seeks to achieve the goals and objectives of the school through organisational collaboration.

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**Nyron Seaton,** Policy Research Specialist  
Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education

**Impact of Higher Education Quality Management Systems on Economic Competitiveness: A Case Study of Trinidad and Tobago**

Most economic literature has limited the treatment of the relationship between human capital and economic competitiveness to that of educational expenditure or student enrolment’s impact on a nation’s national income. The quality of higher education seems to be given secondary importance given the focus on the creation of a knowledge-based or an innovation driven economy. This paper seeks to redress this oversight by examining the role that quality assurance benchmarks play in determining the Trinidad and Tobago's global competitiveness as measured by the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI).

The approach adopted by this paper will be one where the theoretical underpinnings of measuring quality in post secondary education will be broadly analysed from a review of the literature. A review of competitiveness and measures of competitiveness of a nation will be examined, thus setting the context for the discussion between quality of post secondary education and international competitiveness. Following from this, data from the Annual Data Collection Survey 2009-2010 from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education (MSTTE) will be used to inform quality assurance indicators derived from a Coding Matrix developed by Finnie and Usher (2005) to ascertain sector wide quality of the post secondary sector of Trinidad and Tobago. Subsequently, these derived quality indicators will be regressed on the dependent variable, GCI, using a linear regression model to determine whether or not a statistical relationship exists between these indicators and the dependent variable. Finally, the repercussions for policy will be deliberated based on the statistical analysis between these indicators and the dependent variable, GCI.
The Role of Articulation Agreements in Creating Seamless Education in the Higher Education Sector

Articulation agreements play a significant role in fostering seamless movement of students from early childhood care and education through post secondary and tertiary levels. Internationally, there have been significant strides in the promotion of seamless education, and locally we have embarked upon a number of measures to facilitate lifelong learning. This paper focuses on the benefits and challenges associated with effective implementation of articulation agreements as a strategy towards seamlessness across the higher education sector. The aim of this paper is to provide stakeholders with an overview of a few of the key issues in this area and share best practices from international experience to inform national action in the area of articulation and seamlessness in higher education.

Keywords: articulation; transfer; differentiation; diversification; higher education; seamless; Trinidad and Tobago

BEST PRACTICE in Quality Management Systems in Higher Education: Programmes to meet market needs in Engineering and Entrepreneurship

Recognising that a diverse and globally competitive industrial services and manufacturing sector would be critical to leveraging Trinidad and Tobago's depleting oil and gas resources for stable economic growth, the government of Trinidad and Tobago undertook to create an entrepreneurial university that would produce persons capable of contributing and leading in a diverse, globally competitive environment. Using both the ISO 9002:1987 quality management elements and the more recent version of eight quality management principles on which the quality management system standards of the ISO 9000:2000 and ISO 9000:2008 series are based, this report traces the intentional design, development and implementation of the M. Sc. programme in Industrial Innovation Entrepreneurship and Management at the University of Trinidad and Tobago.

The report contrasts the aims and objectives of the postgraduate programme with combined focus on engineering and entrepreneurship, with the mission and vision of the entrepreneurial university, providing examples of applications of the principles including customer focus, continual improvement and mutually beneficial supplier relationships. The report also identifies some of the benefits derived as well as further applications of the principles in the recent, successful “two option” expansion of the programme.
Dr Jorge Luis Morejón, Lecturer
The University of the West Indies, St Augustine

Improvement of Higher Education Learning Environments and Outcomes: Artistic Cross-Curricular Educational Programs and Policies

This study considers the implementation of the arts across higher education curricula as a way to remove barriers between not only fields of study, but also professional environments. Fields of study in academic institutions have become so specialised that university programmes are creating students and professionals completely divorced from other academic references useful to becoming more aware and functional professionals. Furthermore, higher education often lacks programmes where the students can have an opportunity to explore the human aspect of their academic formation, the cultural influences in their education, the local sensitivities of their surroundings and their connectivity to a community of professionals and people in general. This essay brings attention to the need to move to arts-inclusive higher education programmes in order to develop bridges of cooperation, spaces for creative knowledge and collective decision-making strategies only possible through the processes already implemented in arts-making. Artists think outside the box, and therefore contribute with unique insights to fields traditionally foreign to the ways in which art is produced. This research argues that the arts in education, in this case higher education, can be a vehicle for students from various academic disciplines to enrich their knowledge base, to widen their capacity for knowledge reception, and to expand the scope of professional development before they become part of the labour market and after. To improve Quality Management Systems (QMS) in the higher education sector means to improve liaison between purely academic subjects and embodied forms of knowledge production, such as music, theatre, dance, and communication arts in general, by intertwining cross-curricular performance and academic practices.

Keywords: arts-inclusive, arts-making, cross-curricular

Esther Ward, Research Officer Qualification and Recognition
The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago

Blended Learning in Higher Education: Utility or Futility?

Over the past few years, the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Science Technology and Tertiary Education (MSTTE) in Trinidad and Tobago have encouraged the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for learning. New initiatives are continuously being developed to provide adequate ICT infrastructure and content development for students. One of the main challenges faced by higher education institutions in the Trinidad and Tobago education sector is keeping pace with rapidly growing demand. Some institutions have examined the possibilities of offering distance learning through online programmes, but have been faced with problems of student engagement. Financing a movement to fully online programmes has been prohibitive for most institutions. Addressing such challenges, this paper examines alternative delivery platforms which integrate online learning ICT with traditional face-to-face learning. This new approach, broadly referred to as blended learning, builds upon on the advances in ICT and online learning platforms while maintaining the benefits of face-to-face education.
This paper explores the utility or futility of introducing blended learning approaches to programmes offered at higher education institutions in Trinidad and Tobago. The paper examines the potential benefits and risks involved in the transition to blended learning compared with conventional face-to-face education. The paper is based on research conducted on a sample of university students and faculty members engaged on blended learning programmes in Trinidad and Tobago. The quality and flexibility of interaction among students and faculty members are examined. Through the analysis of interviews the paper explores the experiences of students and faculty members involved in blended learning and face-to-face higher education programmes.

Dr Marion Watson, Assistant Professor 1
Dr Ejae John, Assistant Professor 2
Dr Brian Aufderheide, Assistant Professor 3
Dr Nishawn Hanif, Assistant Professor
Process Engineering Programme
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Evolution and Implementation of Industrially-Oriented Capstone Design Projects at UTT

In September 2007, the Process Engineering Programme of the University of Trinidad & Tobago (UTT) offered its first undergraduate capstone design projects. Four years later, these projects have evolved into world-class, open-ended problems that are conducted in collaboration with several local industries and focus on solving problems of interest to them. This experience has been very valuable for the students, the faculty, the university, as well as the industries involved. In these projects, students have to draw upon all the knowledge and know-how they received throughout their training, and fully utilise their problem-solving and communications skills. Although greater emphasis is increasingly placed on producing work-ready UTT graduates, the students found this undertaking to be invaluable as it directly exposed them to the industrial environment, its practices and needs. As a result, they gained a higher degree of confidence in their own capabilities and their ability to cope with the demands posed by business. The strong interaction between faculty and industry is expected to result in stronger and more vibrant, local process-related R&D efforts. This paper describes the evolution of these projects from conceptualisation, to completion, to assessment and finally publication in international forums.
Teachers are critical factors to the success of any educational reform and national well-being and herein lies the concern for the quality of graduates from teacher education programmes. Emphasis is usually placed on the acquisition of subject content and pedagogical skills. However, research has revealed that student-teachers’ prior experiences as learners serve as powerful templates for the ways in which they practise as teachers (Berry 2004, p. 1302). Student teachers are products of their societies and undoubtedly their conception of teaching and learning, as well as their response to training are influenced by their accumulated experiences and the resultant ‘baggage’. Undoubtedly, a teacher’s professional practice is an expression of ‘who the teacher is’ - the ‘person’ of the teacher. As educators, we are convinced that ‘who we are’ and the ‘baggage’ we carry have a more potent influence on student learning and development than our mastery of subject content, our critical thinking abilities and our pedagogical skills have on their learning. A teacher who may be hurting, bitter, insecure or undisciplined, disorganised, unteachable, rebellious, insensitive, unethical or lacks many social graces and values have difficulty meeting the demands and expectations of the professional teacher. In view of this precarious situation, teacher education is of critical concern to providers of education. This paper highlights an attempt by a teacher education programme at the University of Trinidad and Tobago, to help student-teachers get rid of this ‘baggage’, that if left untreated, will prevent the university from producing teachers who are emotionally stable, disciplined, teachable, sensitive and caring and possess the social graces and moral values required for successful teaching and learning.  

The course Classroom Management EEDFN301 is a core course offered to third year Bachelor of Education majors at the University of Trinidad and Tobago in Trinidad and Tobago. A personal enhancement assignment was given to 385 student-teachers for the purpose of helping them become models of the values, attitudes and behaviours they want to see exhibited in their students. Students were required to design and implement a Personal Enhancement Programme to deal with a personal issue that could affect their performance as professional teachers. The duration of the programme was four (4) weeks with the option to continue the programme if it was necessary.

Categories of problems identified by students were:

- emotional: abuse, unforgiveness, bitterness, uncontrolled anger and temper, low self-esteem, rejection, depression, marital issues;
- health and physical: serious health challenges, obesity, poor eating habits;
- self management: poor time management, disorganisation, lack of focus; poor study habits;
- moral values: dishonesty, lack of integrity; and
- other: prejudice, judgemental, unteachable attitude, arrogance.

Eighty-five percent of the students reported positive outcomes and recommended that the programme be compulsory for every student from as early as first year. One year later a survey is being conducted to investigate the effects of the Personal Enhancement Programme on their practica. Results of the survey are being processed.

The aim of this research is to inform directors of the teacher education programme and teacher educators of the need for enhancing the personal lives of student-teachers and provide a conceptual framework for instituting a formalised personal enhancement programme as a mandatory component of the Bachelor of Education programme for prospective teachers.
Making the Case for ‘Competency Based Teacher Standards’ and the Attainment of Learning Outcomes – as a quality measure for Good Practice, Systems and Governance

With the increase in available places and facilities in the technical, tertiary and higher education sector, both on the supply side and the demand side, coupled with the internationalisation of the principles, practices and strategies employed within the institutions and other sector organisations, this has created among the stakeholders a tremendous desire to meet the requirements of ‘accreditation’ and ‘institutional registration’, as part of the thrust for ‘Quality Assurance and the development of a ‘culture of quality locally and regionally’.

To this end, therefore, the education sector, at all levels, requires to establish, maintain and sustain mechanisms, standards and strategies for good governance, good systems and good practice. This is more-so a critical aspect of the national and regional educational development agenda.

The need for attainment of desired ‘learning outcomes’ to be infused into the accreditation process mandates that this practice – which is at the heart of the provision of the goods and services from the sector, to serve the industrial, commercial and other economic partners – must be met through teaching and learning standards and systems that are on the one hand ‘competency based’ and at the same time designed to allow the institutions and providers of the educational services to satisfy the needs of social partners in the productive sectors (H. Winchester & G. Rauret – AUQA /ANECA/AQU) – INQAAHE 2011).

The traditional teaching and learning practices that have been tried and tested over time, to some extent have some relevance in today’s world. However, with technological advancement and enhancement, and the globalised approach to development of people, systems and the environment, creates an opportunity to design, develop and institutionalize a new ‘paradigm’ in the quest for meeting the needs of the stakeholders within the institutions, and at the same time matching the ‘criteria set out in the competency based requirements of the workplace (Competency Based HRM-Dubois 2004; Art & Science of Competency Models, Lucia & Lepsinger 1999).

It is necessary to understand why we need to ensure that ‘quality standards’ should be set for teaching and learning practice; how we can help to improve teaching; how these standards can define ‘good teaching’; the domains that define good teaching – and the over-arching systems, practices and management strategies that need to be in place.

These critical milestones in the teaching and learning processes can be achieved through the following:

- creating a learning environment that promotes fairness;
- having a social regard for learning;
- having and maintaining consistent standards of behaviour;
- observing the diversity of learners;
- concern for holistic development;
- good use of instructional time;
- planning, assessing and reporting;
• maintain community linkages; and 
• achieving personal growth and professional development.

The above mileposts, coupled with ‘self-awareness’ of the service provider – can and will in the long run attain the quest for ‘good governance’ – good systems – and good practice (An adaptation from the ‘NCBTS’ – National Competency Based Teaching Standards of the Phillipines, 2009 - Professional Development Guide of the Department of Education).

Rajiv Jebodh, Legal Research Officer, Legal Department
The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago

Formulating a Co-operative Framework between The Accreditation Council of Trinidad And Tobago (ACTT) and Professional Bodies Established by Statute

In Trinidad and Tobago, certain aspects of the legislative mandates of Professional Bodies as they relate to Quality Assurance in the post secondary and tertiary level educational arena overlap with the statutory functions of The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT). To date, standards applied by those professional bodies in their recognition of academic qualifications for the purpose of licensing persons who wish to enter into professional fields are not harmonized with those standards applied by ACTT in its Quality Assurance process. The development of a proper national system to facilitate a working relationship between ACTT and those Professional Statutory Bodies (PSBs) responsible for licensing professionals is at an embryonic stage. While The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago Act, Chapter 39:06 empowers ACTT to monitor and ensure that the quality and standards of post secondary and tertiary education and training in Trinidad and Tobago meet and exceed internationally accepted best practice benchmarks, PSBs also make an invaluable contribution to improving quality in the post secondary and tertiary education sector. Similar to ACTT, PSBs have a responsibility to protect the public interest, but specifically in relation to setting quality standards for education and training in the particular professional field. As a result of the overlapping mandates of ACTT and PSBs, the potential contribution of these bodies to national quality assurance efforts is yet to be fully materialised. It is important therefore that ACTT and PSBs recognise the importance of each in ensuring that the public is provided with quality assured institutions, programmes and graduates in the relevant professional fields. In this regard, this paper will look at conflicts in the mandates of ACTT and PSBs and examine the possibility of establishing a framework for co-operation in the public interest.
Curtis Floyd, Director (Ag), Accreditation and Quality Enhancement
The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago

Reversing the Trend: Local TLIs as Providers of Cross-Border Education?

Traditionally, there has been a high dependence locally and regionally on accessing quality overseas tertiary education delivered through local tertiary institutions. Quality Assurance and Accreditation in higher education in the Caribbean region, and particularly in Trinidad and Tobago, have been given fervent attention within relatively recent times with the establishment of the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT). This paper aims to examine how ACTT may be facilitating the reversing of the trend by developing capacity in institutions locally for the country to become a provider rather than a consumer of cross-border tertiary education. This obviously requires that the quality of the locally developed and approved programmes be comparable with what is imported from international providers. ACTT's policies and practices in the Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education programmes will be compared with what happens on the global landscape. An examination of the impact this would have on the local landscape involves giving consideration to the number of new programmes being submitted for approval; the number of programmes being approved; the programmes that are in demand; the nature of institutions submitting programmes for approval; the level of stakeholder satisfaction with these locally approved programmes; the level of reduction of dependence on cross-border programmes; the policy of government. This will be followed by an examination of the major challenges, constraints and successes experienced by ACTT in the execution of this service. We shall ultimately explore other suggestions for best practice regionally.

Dionne Smith, Quality Assurance Officer
The Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago

State Funding of Higher Education & Labour Market Demands: Bridging the Gap

The Trinidad and Tobago higher education system has undergone a paradigm shift from being a privilege enjoyed only by the wealthy to an opportunity afforded to all citizens. In its efforts to achieve 60% higher education attainment, the government has initiated a number of funding schemes and grants. Funding schemes such as GATE and HELP, as well as the award of scholarships by the Ministry of Public Administration are being used to encourage citizens to access higher education. Financial constraint is a major deterrent to pursuing higher education, especially among lower socio-economic groups. However, state funding of tertiary programmes that do not meet all the needs of the labour market may lead to graduate unemployment, graduate migration, high rates of employee turnover, as well as declining returns to investment in education. Some critics of ‘mass education’ have even suggested that having a tertiary educated workforce may indicate a growth in the demand for credentials rather than a growth in economic development. While every year thousands of citizens graduate from tertiary level institutions, there remains a skills deficit in certain areas. State funding must therefore become focused on meeting labour market needs rather than encouraging participation in higher education.
The UTT teacher education programme is a 4-year pre-service programme, leading to the B. Ed. degree. The majority of students range in age from 17 to 25, but there are some in-service teachers who may be 45 and over. UTT being a technology university, faculty and students are encouraged to use digital technologies as much as possible to improve the quality of curriculum delivery. The younger students are generally internet-literate, and in 2010 and 2011, almost all were already quite familiar with Facebook, and some even used its tools in preference to others such as email. The B. Ed. programme also focuses on the use of technology tools in education, which led to the decision to use Facebook in the B. Ed. programme classrooms. Facebook is one of the social networking tools that we introduce to our student teachers as prospective tools for use in their own practice. Over the past 2 years, we have used Facebook with over 150 students in 6 different classes. This study seeks to investigate 1) how students use Facebook for their own learning, 2) how they incorporate Facebook into their teaching practice to help students learn and 3) how the use of Facebook impacts on their use of technology in general. It will also seek to identify any other unintended consequences whether positive or negative.

Based on the findings of this study, recommendations will be made for best practices so that teachers will be able to improve the quality of education at the secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels of education by the use of such social networking tools among other emerging technologies.

Dr Ulrich Rauch, Professor
The University of Trinidad and Tobago, The Learning Centre

Beyond Plumbing: Moving IT into the Core of the Academic Enterprise

There is a widespread recognition that information technology has become a strategic enabler of the core academic mission. In consequence, universities invest to procure excellence in the delivery of ICT infrastructure and services. I suggest that for this investment to be fully successful there is a need to shift the locus of strategic planning for the use of information technology from the Office of the CIO Information Technology Services to the Provost's Office, or at a very minimum, deeply involve the academic side of the house. More precisely, this shift serves to identify and develop opportunities to apply innovations in information technology that will enhance core academic functions in research, teaching and student engagement -- including the implementation of enterprise wide student, administrative and academic support systems. This alignment is set up to enable academic leadership to engage other key stakeholders -- internal and external -- to ensure that the academic enterprise is enabled with information technology.
Historically, universities separated “computing as an infrastructure service” from “academic computing,” understood as supporting teaching, learning and research. However, as the separation of expert technologist and expert technology user becomes more fuzzy -- thanks to the ubiquitous availability of digital technology -- it becomes increasingly evident that looking at the mandate of IT on one hand and academic computing on the other, there are many synergies to be exploited. Given current economic constraints that result in a severe difficulty for hiring required skills, the proposition for a closer alignment and exploration of synergies in both services creates opportunities for cost reduction while simultaneously improving relevant service delivery. In my presentation I will introduce a number of perspectives on how to move ICT services to the core of the academic enterprise. This realignment necessitates a re-conceptualising of ICT as an academic enabler beyond merely providing infrastructure. ICT becomes deeply involved and instrumental in the pursuit of research, teaching and learning.

Dr James Bukari, Lecturer, above
Dr Maria Landa-Buil, Lecturer in Spanish/Coordinator, below
Dr Beverley-Anne Carter, Director
The University of the West Indies, Centre for Language Learning
St Augustine Campus

Technology-mediated foreign language learning in one Caribbean higher education context

Ample support for technology-mediated foreign language learning can be found in both general education (see Laurillard 2010) and applied linguistics literature (see Blake 2008). Whether the rationale be that of equipping students with transferable skills and preparing them for lifelong learning, or improving proficiency in the target language and promoting awareness of its culture/s, there are a host of reasons why technology features so prominently in today’s language classrooms. Indeed, discussions on best practice invariably posit a role for teaching and learning with technology. In the context of this study—a foreign language non-specialist programme in a university language centre—we also subscribe to this view.

This paper reports on the integration of two forms of online learning at the Centre for Language Learning, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. The integration of telecollaborative projects in French and Spanish sought to encourage in- and out-of-class engagement with the target language and culture/s, to increase learner motivation and to promote intercultural competence. In another technological innovation, the introduction of a learning management system—TELLMEMORECAMPUS—allowed learners to use technology in guided or independent modes. In TELLMEMORECAMPUS, a rich menu of pedagogical tasks allowed for a sharper focus on linguistic proficiency. It was hoped that by working with the programme, learners would also deepen their self-awareness as learners and their learning autonomy. Data collected through qualitative instruments such as surveys and journals provided rich insights into the perceptions of the participants and a nuanced understanding of the possibilities and pitfalls of technology-mediated L2 learning. Generally though, both teachers and learners felt that technology facilitated a qualitative improvement in the learning experience. The study lends convincing support to our initial contention that foreign language education and research can ill-afford to assign a peripheral role to technology.
Michael Theodore, Course Director
Hugh Wooding Law School Council of Legal Education

The Role of ICT in Transforming Vocational Legal Education in Economically-Challenging Times – Can it be Done and How?

This paper does an environmental scan of current state of vocational tertiary education in the Caribbean and looks at the challenges it currently faces as it grapples with a quantum leap in student intake, reform of the curriculum and the issue of physical expansion to accommodate these increasing numbers. While it recognises that there are some elements which are outside the scope of this paper in addressing these issues (such as a review of the philosophical assumptions on which vocational legal education rests), it advances a radical but rational approach to the application of ICT to address these problems. It will examine the fundamentals and assumptions of the teaching / learning process on which the entire curriculum of vocational legal education is based and then move on towards an examination of the curriculum and how it is delivered. It will also include an examination of both quantitative and qualitative improvements which can be brought about by the application of ICT. It will discuss the application of new technologies including:

- research databases;
- Facebook and other social networking tools for as methods of communications;
- use of the Cloud to have students collaborate in group work and peer assessment;
- use of Second Life in simulation exercises particularly in a vocational environment;
- design of physical infrastructure in a technological age – are lecture theatres necessary?
- use of ‘hard’ technology to improve student learning and interest.

Finally, it will also look at the challenges facing the adoption and application of such technologies in tertiary education.

Dr Olabisi Kuboni, Head, Graduate Programmes, above
Dr Rohan Jowallah, Programme Co-ordinator: Graduate Programmes, below
Academic Programming Delivery Division
The University of the West Indies, Open Campus St Augustine

An Investigation into the Conduct and Management of Student Research in an Online Learning Environment: A Case Study of an Online Masters Research Programme in The University of The West Indies, Open Campus

The increasing number of postgraduate programmes being offered in the online environment has meant that higher education institutions must find new ways to facilitate the student research component of such programmes. With the one-on-one face-to-face contact between students and their supervisors as well as the informal meetings of students no longer possible, universities must find new ways to create interactive learning spaces to support research students in an online distributed environment. Some academics suggest that within the online learning environment interaction and socialisation between teachers and learners are limited. Such views do not take into account the technological advancements of the
ICTs and their capacity to support meaningful learning both individually and interpersonally. This presentation will report on a study aimed at evaluating strategies implemented to support the research activities of postgraduate students pursuing online Masters programmes in the University of the West Indies, Open Campus, as well as the activities of their supervisors. The three main strategies employed were (1) the use of a web-based ‘teaching-learning space’ to facilitate asynchronous interaction between students and their supervisors; (2) the provision of a scheduling tool to facilitate the planning of one-on-one meetings via a synchronous web-conferencing tool; and (3) the organisation of research seminars using the same web-conferencing tool. The study also sought to examine students’ perceptions of their experience as student researchers in the online environment. Participants were students (n=70) and their supervisors (n=17). All participants were required to complete a questionnaire. Data were also collected from postings in the discussion forums. Overall, notwithstanding limitations, the data showed that there are benefits to be derived from conducting student research activities in an online environment.

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Using ICT to Create Quality Learning Experiences: A Practical Guide for Tertiary Teachers of History

In many tertiary institutions throughout Trinidad and Tobago, History or History-based courses are part of the requirements for the fulfilment of non-History programmes. In such instances, teachers of History are often faced with students who come to them with little or no background in History; and/or students who come to their classes with preconceptions of History subjects as “boring”, “complex”, “inaccessible”, and “irrelevant”. This paper looks at ways of redressing this sense of distance and inaccessibility that students feel by using contemporary ICT, including applications used in social (non-education) contexts, to assist students in coming to historical understandings. The paper looks at ways in which tertiary teachers can use the technologies that are used by their students to enter into the world of their students; it proposes practical ways of using technology to encourage immersion learning in History classrooms. The practical methods it proposes can be used in teaching students doing specialist History degrees, as well as those doing survey History courses as part of other programmes. It proposes methods through which students can be further engaged by making them participants in creating their own historical content. One of the areas the paper will explore is the use of Social networking media in creating quality student-centred learning experiences. Further, the paper will examine some of the constraints on the use of technology in Caribbean educational settings, and possible means of overcoming these challenges and constraints. It concludes with practical activities that teachers can employ to create engaging History classrooms through ICT.
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